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ACTION SCT-03

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AID-01	ARA-01	A-01	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	L-01
	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIS-01
	OMB-01	PA-02	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01	SNP-00	SP-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-09	G-00	/047W				

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R 112022Z OCT 94
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2426
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 006737

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PTER, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE OFFICIALS ARREST THREE IN POSSIBLE
- LINK TO AMIA TERRORIST BOMBING
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SUMMARY

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1. THE ARGENTINE PRESS REPORTS THAT A ROUTINE INVESTIGATION INTO A THEFT OF ELECTRICAL POWER IN A BUENOS AIRES SUBURB LED POLICE TO FOUR KILOGRAMS OF "TROTYL" EXPLOSIVES AND MAY HAVE OPENED A NEW LINE OF INVESTIGATION INTO THE JULY 18 BOMBING OF ARGENTINA'S JEWISH MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA). YET INVESTIGATING

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OFFICIALS HAVE PUBLICLY DOWNPLAYED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIND, HOPING TO HOLD EXPECTATIONS TO A MANAGEABLE LEVEL. THE AMIA ATTACK KILLED AT LEAST 86 PEOPLE AND THE POLITICAL PRESSURE TO FIND THE CULPRITS IS HIGH. END SUMMARY.

THREE ARRESTS

2. POLICE ARRESTED THREE SUSPECTS IN RECENT DAYS: ALI AL HASSAN, A 24-YEAR-OLD SYRIAN CITIZEN, OCTOBER 8, IN THE SOUTH CASTELAR NEIGHBORHOOD OF MORON, A SUBURB OF BUENOS AIRES; AND ERNESTO TANUZ, 64, AND HIS SON JULIO, 24, OCTOBER 10, ALSO IN MORON. THE TANUZES, ARGENTINES OF LEBANESE EXTRACTION, REPORTEDLY OWN THE APARTMENT WHERE AL HASSAN LIVED.

HOW THE ARRESTS CAME ABOUT

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3. ARGENTINE POWER COMPANIES REGULARLY SUFFER LOSSES WHEN ILLEGAL LINES ARE ATTACHED TO THEIR NETWORKS AND POWER IS SIPHONED OFF. AN INVESTIGATION INTO ONE SUCH LINE IN CASTELAR RECENTLY LED POLICE TO AL HASSAN'S APARTMENT, WHERE THEY FOUND THE EXPLOSIVES AND AN EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF PRESS ARTICLES REGARDING THE AMIA ATTACK AND THE MARCH 17, 1992, BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES. POLICE ALSO REPORTEDLY FOUND DOCUMENTS ISSUED TO AL HASSAN IDENTIFYING HIS PLACE OF BIRTH AS ALEPPO, SYRIA, AND AN IDENTIFICATION CARD -- PROBABLY FALSE -- ISSUED IN HIS NAME AND NAMING HIM AS A STAFFER IN THE MILITARY ATTACHE'S OFFICE AT THE IRAQI EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES. IRAQ'S EMBASSY HERE CLOSED IN NOVEMBER 1993 AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ARGENTINA'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE GULF WAR COALITION. AL HASSAN DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXPLOSIVES, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS.

AL HASSAN

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4. AL HASSAN HAS RUN A MODEST CLOTHING STORE IN A SOUTH CASTELAR FLEA MARKET FOR THE LAST FOUR TO FIVE YEARS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, YET HE REPORTEDLY OWNS TWO CARS AND A VAN. HIS SYRIAN PASSPORT -- ALSO SEIZED IN THE INVESTIGATION -- REPORTEDLY SHOWS THAT HE HAS TRAVELLED FREQUENTLY IN THE ARAB WORLD IN RECENT YEARS.

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5. POST WILL CONFIRM DETAILS OF THESE PRELIMINARY PRESS REPORTS WITH POLICE AND JUDICIAL CONTACTS.

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